

Study on the Classroom Questions in Senior High School English Reading Class based on Classroom Observation

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Abstract

Classroom questioning is not only the topic of dialogue between teachers and students in classroom teaching, but also the medium of communication determines the degree of students' thinking and whether and how much students' learning takes place (Liu Ruimin, 2020). Based on classroom observation and corpus translation, this paper makes an in-depth analysis of classroom questioning by case teachers in the process of classroom teaching, and points out some deficiencies in the process and design of classroom questioning. In addition, the types of classroom questions are not diverse enough, the hierarchy is low, and the language used in classroom feedback is monotonous and lacking. There are no classroom problems, such as the context of classroom problems.

Keywords

Classroom Questioning; Classroom Observation; Questioning Feedback.

1. Introduction

The English Curriculum Standards for Senior High Schools (2017 Edition, 2020 Revision) (Ministry of Education, 2018) put forward many novel learning concepts, among which the concepts of "learner-centered", "core literacy as teaching goal" and "deep learning" have received wide attention from researchers. To put these ideas into practice in the classroom requires the central part of the classroom -- classroom questioning. Research on classroom questioning has become the inevitable way to practice these concepts. For example: (1) The foreign language learning model of "applying learning and asking for creativity" advocates effective learning as the center, practice and application as the basis, problem solving as the orientation, and innovative thinking and ability cultivation as the driving force to promote students' deep learning (Luo Huifang, 2021); (2) Use classroom questioning to cultivate students' critical thinking (Liu Jiahui, 2020); (3) Cultivate students' thinking quality by asking questions in English reading teaching (Li Mingyuan, 2020), etc. More and more researchers have paid attention to the importance of classroom questioning, such as the classroom questions proposed by Liu Ruimin and the relationship between classroom observation and improved teaching (Liu Ruimin, 2020). Therefore, it is particularly important to study the current situation of teachers' classroom questioning. In addition, under the epidemic situation, the popularity of online courses has also changed the learning methods of some students, and the educational resources provided by the state, "National Educational Resources Public Service Platform", has become an extremely important teaching resource. During the epidemic last year, the national cloud platform for primary and secondary schools provided an important guarantee for online learning for 180 million primary and secondary school students (information technology education for primary and secondary schools, 2021). This year, the national cloud platform for primary and secondary schools has been comprehensively upgraded to achieve full coverage of all major disciplines in primary and junior high schools (Lin Huanxin, 2021).

To sum up, Chinese "cloud platform" educational resources have received more and more attention, but there is still a lack of research on the rationality of online educational resources' classroom questioning. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to explore what the high-quality education resource platform provided by the state has in terms of classroom questioning and what needs to be improved, so as to make a more perfect classroom questioning design in the future.

2. Research Design

2.1. Research Objects

In this paper, the purpose sampling method is adopted, and two high school English reading public classes are studied on the principle of typicality. The subjects were all selected from two reading courses which were awarded the title of "ministerial-level Excellent Course" on the "National Public Service Platform of Education Resources". In order to reflect the typical, the two case teachers teach for the third grade.

To protect the privacy of teachers, teachers are referred to as Teacher A and Teacher B in this article. The teachers and course information are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Classroom teacher and content information sheet

Sample Numble	Teacher	Teaching grade	Teaching content
1	A	Senior, grade 3	Family
2	B	Senior, grade 3	A Successful Failure

2.2. Research Questions

What this study needs to understand is the use of question types by teachers in teaching and the feedback. Specifically, the following three questions should be answered:

- 1) What are the characteristics of the types of questions asked by teachers in class? (What are the types? What percentage of each type?);
2. How did the students answer the questions asked by the teacher in class? (In what way? What percentage of each answer?);
- 3) What is the feedback given by the teacher after asking questions in class? What are the feedback phrases? How often is it used?

2.3. Research Procedures

In order to find out the current situation of question design in reading class of senior three English teachers in "National Public Service Platform of Education Resources", this study adopts classroom observation method. By making observation scale, it observes, records and analyzes the questions of teachers in English reading class, so as to find out the deficiencies in question design. This paper evaluates teachers' questioning in reading class from the whole process of question design, question asking, answer and feedback. The question type adopts Nuttall's classification of classroom questions in reading class, which divides classroom questions into five categories: literal meaning questions, comprehensive generalization questions, guided inference questions, guided evaluation questions and personal opinions. The question session observed whether the language expression of the teacher's question was clear, accurate and the number of questions. In the answer section, statistical observation was made from the way of answering and students' answers. The final feedback section observed the feedback words used by teachers in the feedback process. On this basis, 6 observation points and 16 observation indicators were set up (see Table 2).

3. Results and Analysis of Classroom Observation

In the two video samples observed, all the questions were presented along with the teacher's verbal expression, while for more complex or informative questions, the teacher usually presented them through the combination of verbal expression, multimedia and blackboard writing. In the recording process, teachers often use "catchphrase questions" such as "right?" "yes?" The statistical data of 2 groups of 6 observation points and 16 observation indicators were finally obtained (see Attachment 1). Through data analysis, the status quo of classroom question design of two high school English reading teachers was summarized as follows:

3.1. Usage of Question Types

The total number of questions in the two 40-minute classes is 56, and the average number of questions in a class is 28, and the total number of questions in the two classes is not much different from the average. In Figure 1, the questions are classified according to Nuttall's classification of reading classroom questions, and it is found that samples 1 and 2 as well as the total data are in line with the following data trend: that is, comprehensive overview questions are raised the most, followed by literal meaning questions, followed by leading inference questions, expressing personal opinions and leading evaluation questions. As can be seen from Figure 2, the general overview category accounted for 37%, 10% more than the second literal category; The least mentioned category of guided evaluation accounted for only 2%.

Judging from the usage of question types, the two teachers mentioned few questions that could cause students to think deeply. Nuttall's classification of reading questions follows the order of thinking level from low to high, that is, literal questions require students to complete with a low level of thinking, while comprehensive overview and guided inference require students to complete with a little thinking, and guided evaluation and personal opinions require students to have a high level of thinking and bring their own opinions. It is generally believed that in order to arouse students' deep thinking and achieve deep learning, it is necessary to use all kinds of problems comprehensively and transition from the problems requiring low thinking level to the problems requiring high thinking level. However, most of the questions asked by the two teachers required lower-level thinking, which was not conducive to students' deep learning.

3.2. Students' Answers after Asking Questions

In two 40-minute classes, students answered questions 63 times in total, with an average of 31.5 times per class. In sample 1 and sample 2, students tend to answer questions individually. In sample 1, students answer questions individually 13 times, accounting for 59.00% of the total proportion. In sample 2, middle school students answered questions 14 times, accounting for 34.14% of the total proportion. What is more prominent is that in sample 2, the number of times that teacher B asked the whole class to answer accounts for a large proportion, and in sample 2, teacher B also prefers the mode in which teachers ask themselves questions and answer by themselves. As can be seen from Figure 3, the number of group answers is relatively small, with sample 1 only accounting for 18.18% and sample 2 only accounting for 2.43%. As can be seen from Figure 4, students' answers in class were generally optimistic. Students who were picked up or volunteered to answer questions were able to express their ideas fluently and speak more complete and accurate sentences under the guidance of the teacher. Very few students did not know how to answer the questions even if they were picked up.

From the general situation of the way of answering the questions and the number of answers given by students, both teachers in sample 1 and sample 2 prefer to mainly choose the way of answering the questions individually, supplemented by the way of self-answering, group answering and whole class answering. Allowing individual students to answer questions helps

students to think independently, but it is easy to overlook the thinking of the whole class when focusing on the answers of a single individual. In contrast, Teacher B did better than teacher A.

3.3. Teachers' Feedback on Questions

According to the observation scale (Table 2) and observation record form (Attachment 2), it can be seen that the teachers in sample 1 and sample 2 gave timely feedback after students answered the questions. The teachers would give timely positive feedback for group answers, individual answers or class answers. Such as:

[Example 1]

In sample 1, teacher A showed his students a piece of his wife's prayer to her deceased husband. In the video, although the wife hated her husband's bad habits of eating too much, eating ungracefully, snoring and so on, the wife finally said that she did not hate this feeling, but missed it very much, and she had no such person to despise anymore. After watching the video, teacher A asked the students what they thought of the video

A: "How do you feel after you watching the video?"

S(All): "Moved."

A: "Yeah, you all feel moved. But why feel moved?"

S1: "Because although the man is annoyed, the woman missed him."

A: "Yes. Because the woman missed her husband although he was so annoying."

In the process of questioning and feedback, Teacher A gave timely and positive feedback to all students and to individuals. The teacher would also repeat the answers made by students to affirm them and indirectly correct the mistakes made by students by repeating them.

In addition, the two teachers will guide the students to further improve their answers even if the answers given by the students are incomplete. Such as:

[Example 2]

In sample 2, Teacher B led the students to learn an article about failure and success. The article described the experience of an explorer who went to the Antarctic. In the course of the Antarctic exploration, the explorers met many difficulties. After the instructor asks the students to read through the passage, find out what kind of difficulties the explorer encountered at each stage.

B: "What kind of difficulties did the explorer encounter in second stage?"

S2: "He was lack of food."

B: "Yes, and what difficulty else did he met? Can you find this?"

S2: "Frostbite."

B: "Yes, that's it. He encountered food lack and frostbite. Very good."

In the process of questioning and feedback, Teacher B reminded S2 if there was anything else he could not find when he gave an incomplete answer to S2, indicating that the student should think again. Under the guidance of the teacher, student S2 finally gave a complete answer, and Teacher B finally affirmed by repeating the student's answer again.

In sample 1 and sample 2, both teachers gave timely positive feedback, but the deficiency is that the two teachers' feedback terms are consistent and monotonous. It can be seen from the classroom observation record (the underlined part) that the teacher used a lot of broad feedback words such as "yes", "very good.", "good try.", "good guess" when giving feedback, but the feedback words were not diversified and specific enough.

4. Suggestions on the Design of Classroom Questions

4.1. Create Question Context

Create a real English learning environment for students in the classroom. For teachers, it is mainly reflected in the language of teachers, mainly using understandable language, and only using mother tongue to explain when necessary. Students may not be used to it at the beginning, but this process can give them a period of adjustment time, and help them understand and get through this stage through sign language and other ways. When students get used to being taught in the target language, it helps them to better acquire their native language. When asking questions, creating question context for students can deepen students' understanding and thinking of questions.

4.2. Ask Hierarchical Questioning

On the one hand, the multi-level requirements of the new curriculum standard affect the thinking level of questions; on the other hand, students' thinking level is also different. These two aspects determine that the design of questions should be hierarchical, namely, hierarchical questioning, to meet the needs of different students. Therefore, teachers need to pay attention to and study the questioning points of hierarchical questioning when setting classroom questions. Students form new cognition by constantly integrating and constructing new knowledge on the basis of original knowledge, so as to form their own cognitive results. Therefore, when setting questions, it is necessary to not only classify the reading questions according to Nuttall, but also to consider students' recent development area, so as to build a new bridge between original knowledge experience and new knowledge through setting questions. Through the "support" provided by teachers, the knowledge in textbooks is gradually transformed into the knowledge in students' own minds.

4.3. Increase Interaction and Engagement among Students

The interaction between students can be realized in the process of group cooperation. The new round of curriculum reform advocates cooperative learning, cooperative ability and cooperative consciousness have become the new requirements for students. At the same time, through the interaction between students, students can be better invested in the class, improve the participation and positive degree of students. This can be reflected in class problems by proposing problems that can be solved through group work, in order to increase the intimacy between students and create a relaxed learning atmosphere.

4.4. Provide Diversified and Specific Feedback

Teachers should pay attention to their feedback form and content when giving feedback. In the form of feedback, teachers should be diversified, not too monotonous in the feedback language, so that students can not feel whether they are good or bad. When setting questions, teachers can presuppose what students' answers are like, and accumulate feedback words accordingly in advance. In terms of feedback content, teachers need to be specific. If students simply say "yes, very good." they don't know exactly where they got it wrong. In class, when students are consolidating basic knowledge, mistakes should be corrected in time, and correction points should be given, and students should be informed through direct error receiving, indirect error correcting, peer error correcting and other ways, so that students can formally face them. In this process, the teacher's attitude should be gentle and patient.

5. Conclusion

This paper takes the understanding high school English Reading open course published by "National Education Resources Public Service Platform" as the research content, observes how

excellent English teachers design questions in class, and points out the typical problems and suggestions in the setting of classroom questions in the open course. Classroom questioning is a key bridge between students and teachers, as well as between students' thinking and knowledge. Well-designed questions can not only improve students' learning efficiency, but also mobilize students' enthusiasm and participation, especially for reading classes, which can promote students' in-depth learning. Therefore, teachers should take it seriously when setting classroom questions, timely discover and improve the shortcomings of question design, so as to promote the level of classroom questioning and students' learning efficiency.

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